SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY: Bert Dorer DATE Jan 4 1985
EO or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

PALESTINE REFUGEE PROBLEM

Resettlement of Palestine Refugees

In the Jezirah Area

Extracts from memorandum by Sir Herbert Stewart

"Stewart has now prepared the attached estimates of numbers which might be accommodated. These estimates vary from between 100,000 and 245,000 persons. Stewart thinks, however, that it would be unwise to count on more than 150,000.

One of the difficulties in making any estimates is that we cannot be certain how much of the land shown as "culturable waste" in the attached schedule has a rainfall high enough to allow settlement, as Stewart and Crawford feel that much of the 1,796,000 acres shown as culturable may lie in this low rainfall area. (The figures of the schedule are taken from an official Syrian Government publication).

Stewart thinks that any settlement should be a combination of mechanised and animal agriculture but points out that it will probably be impossible to buy enough ploughing animals for the latter.

Stewart also thinks that the item (see Damascus telegram) "tractors and farm implements £450,000" is too low and that 1,000,000 acres, of which half would be cultivated each year, would need 1,000 tractors. The cost of these would vary according to whether Crawley or wheeled tractors were used. The latter cost about only one half the former. The cost of tractors alone might vary between £500,000 and £1,000,000. There must be added to this item the cost of threshing machines or combines, farm implements, milk animals, etc. The total of the whole item might vary between £900,000 and £1,400,000. This would bring the total for the initial outlay to between £1,700,000 and £2,100,000.

Crawford points out that all estimate of areas is guess work and that one of the greatest difficulties in settlement is likely to be the question of land ownership. The land, except near the towns, is said to be State domain, but from what Crawford was able to find out there is no doubt that certain tribes and big sheikhs have acquired rights which it would be very difficult to upset and which, in the unsettled state of the Jezirah, cannot be ignored.

Referring again to the initial outlay, you will notice that provision has been made for tents only, on the supposition that the settlers can gradually build their own houses. Money will be wanted here later for wood work, etc., for these houses.

Crawford points out again that all estimates of costs and time are also mere guess work and that the only practical way of getting down to work is for a properly constituted Commission to visit the Jezirah and study conditions on the spot.

SECRET

From figures of the rural population given in the report of Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners, it would appear that the Homs - Hama area is lightly populated and Stewart thinks that some thought should be given to the possibility of settling refugees here."

SETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IN THE JEZIRAH, SYRIA

1st SUPPOSITION - Out of 1,796,000 acres said to be culturable waste only 1,000,000 acres actually culturable.

1. 1,000,000 acres culturable by tractors

Allow 20 families per 1000 acres (This is double that proposed for the Groundnut scheme)

Total families needed = 20 X 1000 = 20,000

Total persons = 100,000

or :-

II. (a) 750,000 acres by tractors

20 families per 1000 acres

Families required = 20 X 750 = 15,000

Total persons = 75,000

(b) 250,000 acres by bullocks

(i) 30 acres per family

Total families required = 8,300

Total persons = 41,500

Grand total of persons (a) 75,000

(b) 41,500

116,500

or

(ii) 20 acres per family

Total families = 12,500

Total persons = 62,500

Grand total (a) 75,000

Grand total (b) 62,500

137,500

NOTE: Ref. II (i) 8,300 pairs of bullocks will have to be found or in (ii) 12,500 pairs.

DECLASSIFIED

2nd SUPPOSITION - That 1,700,000 acres are culturable
96,000 acres left for roads, etc.

I. 1,700,000 acres culturable by tractors

20 families per 1000 acres

Total families = 20 X 1700 = 34,000

Total persons 170,000

or :-

II. (a) 500,000 acres culturable by bullocks

(i) 30 acres per family

Total families = 17,000

Total persons= 85,000

or :-

(ii) 20 acres per family

Total families = 25,000

Total persons=125,000

(b) 1,200,000 acres by tractors

20 families per 1000 acres

Total families = 20 X 1200 = 24,000

Total persons=120,000

Grand total of persons

(a) 85,000 or 125,000

(b) 120,000 or 120,000

205,000 or 245,000

May 5, 1949.

RECOMMENDED